

Brainstorming

The point of brainstorming is to collect as many different ideas as possible. Unfortunately, groups get in the way of unique ideas. Article the other day on how 2-3 year olds suppress skills in order to fit in with peers.

How can you prevent our need to conform from wrecking your brainstorming session?

Have people work on their own for a few minutes then bring the group together to begin the brainstorming. This may keep groupthink/conformity at bay.

When brainstorming it is important to:

- Not criticize
- Have an ice breaker
- Don't get bogged down in details, this is not the time to don't worry about who will wear the pac-man costume... pac-man slide/example...
- positive emotions, laughter, ridiculous ideas

Good brainstorming environment:

- Different from usual meeting space (maybe even outside)
- Comfortable
- Allows mobility – people can move around, sit or stand as they wish
- Large pads of paper or dry erase boards
- Competition

When things get stuck – change it up! Try:

Physical exercises – have everyone walk around the room

Try the opposite – list the worst ideas you can think of to promote this event

Pie in the sky – if we had an unlimited budget....

Change up where people are sitting

Remember to follow-up!!!!

- Dot voting can help narrow down ideas.

Cross-channel promotion

Consider forms of promotion early

- What is available to use/what are you currently using? Not worth jumping into a new platform/area w/o familiarity
- Don't limit yourself! Look for ways to include both digital and "live"/analog promotion..

Connect channels for efficiency

- ...but remember: the whole point is to tie them together!
- Use of hashtags, events, links, etc.
- Use of analog (flyers, pictures) as posts to social media, etc.
- Links from one platform to others

Know the rules/unique functions

- Potential and limitations of various channels (character limits, FB posting parameters, use of logos, etc.)
- Rules of institution, obviously

Think outside the box!

- This is where the brainstorming comes in. Promotion allows for a lot of originality, and there are plenty of ways to tie things together. (HP trivia, Spielmans talk)

Follow up

- Once your event is over, you still have an opportunity to promote the library. Post photos, thank those who helped out, live-tweet...drum up enthusiasm for your next event!

Now, spend some time in your groups thinking of ways to use cross-channel means to promote to a wider audience. Lay out a few formats/channels you want to focus on, and look at ways to tie them together, using their unique functions.

Outside Promotions

Slide #1 Rainbow Rowell

To talk about outside promotions, I'm going to share a little case study of a major event the Metro State Library produced in 2014, panel discussion with YA author Rainbow Rowell called Reading Rainbow Rowell: A Community Forum on Kids' Right to Read, a major event we put together in partnership with Saint Paul Public Library.

Rainbow Rowell is the author of the acclaimed YA book *Eleanor & Park*. As some of you may remember, the book was to be featured in a summer reading program produced by Anoka Public Library & Anoka-Hennepin Schools here in Minnesota. At the last moment, the book was challenged in the high school library for containing obscene language. Under pressure, the public library canceled an appearance by Rowell.

The news blew up on librarian social media. Like many others, I took to Facebook and twitter to express my dismay and to propose that we bring Rainbow Rowell to the Twin Cities ourselves. A

librarian friend from Saint Paul Public pinged me to let me know that a youth services librarian named Marika Staloch from Saint Paul was proposing the same thing. I consulted with my colleagues that night and by the next day I and another Metro State librarian colleague and Marika were planning to bring Rainbow to St. Paul for two appearances a month later, one at each library.

Slide #2 Rainbow Rowell Flyer

We did all the normal things for publicity. We were fortunate to have access St. Paul Public Library's excellent graphic designer to create images for social media and flyers. We worked with Metro State's own marketing department. My colleague Michelle Filkins wrote a great press release. We leveraged all of the library's social media accounts, as did St. Paul Public.

Slide #3 RR Panelists

What really made the forum a success, I think, is that we invited participation from with a number of internal and external partners.

- At Metro State, Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship, who provided logistical support, staff, and some funds
- Students for Education Reform, a student group
- Staff and librarians from both Metro State Library and St. Paul Public Library
- Addendum Booksellers, YA bookstore came and sold books
- The panel itself was comprised of representatives from various stakeholder groups
 - o Julie Blaha, President of the Anoka-Hennepin Schools teachers union
 - o Two youth participants from the Metro State / SPPL program Teens Know Best
 - o Maureen Gormley, MLA's intellectual freedom chair and a public librarian
 - o Professor Sarah Park Dahlen, LIS faculty at St. Kate's

I really don't think we could have filled the auditorium on such short notice without the audiences each of these parties brought in. We went beyond networking with internal and external parties to publicize the Rainbow Rowell event to inviting their participation.

Now, please take just a few minutes to discuss in your small groups what internal and external parties you might reach out to to help publicize your event and perhaps event to partner with.